

PREJUDICE AGAINST COLOR.

THERE are some people who consider the degraded and demoralized condition of many of our free colored population an argument against emancipation. But it should be considered that this condition has not resulted from their enjoying equal human rights. On the contrary, it has resulted from their being deprived of such rights by a general cruel prejudice against their persons, which has tended to keep them ignorant and degraded, and thus provoked them to do evil, instead of inclining them to do well. The present existing prejudice against the colored race, so peculiar to this nation, has resulted from a vitiated education, and not from a principle of instinct, as some have professed to believe.

“Nothing strikes like a fact.” The positions above laid down can be supported by undeniable facts. We appeal, then, to **FACTS**. But before we proceed to do this, we wish it to be understood, that we deny that the free colored people, in general, among us, are as degraded as is commonly supposed. If any one believes otherwise, we refer him to the legislative examination in Pennsylvania, the reports of temperance societies, &c. &c., in proof of what we assert. Still, we admit that the real or supposed condi-

tion of this class is among the most formidable obstacles to general emancipation.

Whether imaginary or real, this condition is the result of *prejudice against color*, which either prevents the moral education of the proscribed class, or else refuses to *recognize* moral worth where it actually exists. Who cannot see that, in either case or in both, such a prejudice must be highly criminal and offensive to God? The scenes of Canterbury, New Haven and Canaan, are sufficient to show that this prejudice is at war with the gracious purposes of God and the precepts of the gospel, which predict and require the intellectual and moral elevation of the whole human race.

To say that such a prejudice is the result of "a principle of instinct" implanted by the Creator, involves the blasphemy of asserting that he has implanted instincts in our bosoms which impel us to wage war upon his promised millennium, and to disobey his command to assist in hastening its progress. The supposition is likewise refuted by the fact, that this prejudice is wholly acquired, and, like other artificial states of feeling, is capable of being increased. But to our facts.

"I have myself," says a modern writer,* "travelled in Holland, for several days in succession, on board stages and canal boats, in company with a colored family from Surinam, and at all

* William Goodell.

the hotels, at Sands, at Alkmaer, the Helder, at Sardam and at Amsterdam, as well as in the public conveyances, they were treated with as much attention and politeness as any other ladies and gentlemen. Why should they not have been? They were as well-bred, as intelligent, as refined, as well clad and as wealthy, as any of their fellow travellers. The finger of scorn would have been pointed at any American, as to an unmannerly brute, unfit for decent society, who should have been guilty of any rudeness or incivility towards them. A few days afterwards, being invited to dine with one of the first merchants of Amsterdam, (and I may say of Europe,) the gentleman to whom our ship and cargo were consigned—whom should I meet, with his wife and daughters, in his drawing-room and at his table, but some of these same colored gentlemen and ladies from Surinam! I afterwards recognized them at church and on the public promenades, in company with the very *elite* of that splendid city. Yet the Hollanders are somewhat whiter than the Americans! What I saw among them, may be seen every day in all parts of Europe—at London, at Edinburgh, at Vienna, at St. Petersburg, at Paris. Americans who have visited Lafayette, at La Grange, relate just such incidents as have now been described. Does this look as though the American prejudice against colored persons was an ‘instinct’ of our natures? No. It is the very spirit

of Cain ; the spirit of the heathen, whom Paul describes as 'hateful and hating one another ;' the same spirit that, this moment, prompts the Chinese to look down upon the European nations as barbarians ; the same spirit that once led the proud Jews to shun the polluting touch of the Samaritans ; the same spirit that now, in turn, crushes down the degraded Jew through all the cities of Europe which throw open their doors to the colored man ! the same spirit that erects against the gospel the deadening influence of caste in heathen India. And yet, it holds the *bad* pre-eminence of being the only instance in which man despises his brother on account of the color his Maker gave him !

" But let us take our stand in India, for a few moments, to contemplate this prejudice. Accompany me to Prince of Wales' Island, in the straits of Malacca, more commonly known by its original Malayan name of *Pulo Penang*. Here, under the English flag, there have been collected together, in a few years, a representation from all the principal nations of Europe and Asia. In one little town of twelve or fifteen thousand inhabitants they are congregated together. More than fifty different languages are spoken every day in the market house ; the laws are printed in more than forty ; the superintendent of the police is able to understand more or less of about twenty of them. Penang is a little world in miniature. The Chinese pagoda, the Hindoo

temple, the Mahometan mosque, the Catholic cathedral, the Protestant church, are all seen at one view. The buildings display the varied architecture of these different nations—from the thatched hut of the semi-barbarous Malay to the palace of the English governor. And, swarming in its busy and crowded streets, are seen the various costumes of the East and West, with almost all the known varieties of the human form, complexion and features, from the equator to the poles. Here stands the Russian, and near him the pallid Dane, he of the flaxen hair and light blue eye, by the side of whom, the haughty Carolinian, of sallow hue, might almost be mistaken for one of his own yellow slaves. The florid Hollander is there, the ruddy Englishman, the darker Frenchman, the swarthy Portuguese, the still darker Spaniard, proud of his descent from the African Moor, (who first taught him and Europe the use of the so-called Arabic figures.) The Moor himself is there, and still bears close resemblance to his Spanish cousin. The Turk is there, the Persian next, and next the princely Arab, the most majestic of men, with his piercing eye and his flowing beard, the descendant and representative of Abraham—and yet the Arab is a colored man! The Chinese, too, is there, the delicate-skinned native of Nankin, and the tawny emigrant from the more southern provinces. The Jew of Amsterdam is there, as *white* as the proper Hollander who des-

pises him—and he takes cordially by the hand the *black* Jew of Coromandel, who also is there, descended, as we all know, from the same parent stock, yet lacking little, save the woolly hair, to prevent his being classed with the Ethiop. The Hindoo, too, is there, the Chooliah, the Malay, and the dark Lascar, whose long, flowing hair, of glossy jet, prevents you from deciding him a negro. The African is there.

“Stand here with me, skeptical philosopher, one moment, in *Pulo Penang*, and tell me how many separate and distinct races of men, thy wisdom will please to write down? Where wilt thou draw the demarcation line between the white and the colored man? The gradation is perfect—the chain unbroken. Between the Dane and the African there is no chasm!—What sayest thou? Art thou become dumb? Hath not ‘God made of one blood all nations,’ as he says he did? Or wilt thou correct the error of Moses, and give us a new edition of thy Maker’s workmanship?

“And stand with me—Christian of America, one moment, at *Pulo Penang*. Thou who dost in *words* acknowledge thy brotherhood with all men, but in *works*, dost deny it! Open thine eyes upon this little world in miniature. Remember it is but a specimen of the myriads of mankind, in all nations and ages. It may well remind thee of that vast assembly which will one day be collected, of all kindreds, and tongues,

and nations. Open now the book of the divine law. How readest thou? Does it say, 'Thou shalt love thy' *white* 'neighbor as thyself?' How? Will you send your eye over those vast continents, to search out the little corner of the world where the sixth part of the human family resides? Those whose faces, (according to the learned philosophy of the East,) have been bleached by the *white rains* [snows] of the north, to such deathly paleness? Will you look your Maker in the face and tell him you find a natural 'instinct' in your bosom, which He has implanted there—and which forbids you to love any of his equal children, except the *white* man?

"So much for the *geography* of the question. Now for a little scrap of *history*. The negro, you say, is of a degraded race. But who are *you*? An American; a descendant of the Europeans. And the Europeans—who are *they*? *Who*? The noble ones of the earth—the men of literature—of civilization—of science—and of true religion. And whence, pray, did they derive their literature, their civilization and their religion? Europeans were hordes of naked barbarians, you know, a few centuries since! Yes; but they drew wisdom from the Greeks, the Romans, the Hebrews; and they are drawing fresh lessons still. See those ponderous volumes of classic and sacred literature. But whence, I pray you, did the Greeks, the Romans, the Hebrews, derive their civilization and their letters?

The Greeks and Romans were once savages. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were plain men, dwelling in tents. No record is made of their literature. When God determined to make of them a great nation, in what school of learning did he train up their appointed legislator, deliverer and guide? '*Moses* was learned in all the wisdom and knowledge of the *Egyptians*!' To whom did the Greeks and Romans look up, for instruction in letters, in the arts? To the *Egyptians*! Where did wealthy citizens of Rome and Athens, in their prouder days, send off their princely sons for education, as some among us now send their sons to the universities of Europe? They sent them to *Egypt*—to *Ethiopia*! But who were the Egyptians and Ethiopians? *Negroes*! Yes, negroes; with woolly hair, flat noses and jetty skins; for thus they are described by Herodotus, the prince of historians, who journeyed among them. The statue of the Sphynx, one of the seven wonders of the world, surviving the wreck of centuries, exhibits these same features at the present day. In what page of ancient literature, I pray you, is it written that the Africans were accounted an inferior race? *Inferior*, did I say? The Romans were wont to mention 'the most excellent Ethiopians.' The Greeks imagined their deities resided among them. Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, was supposed to have been an African princess. Atlas, whose shoulders sustained the

world, and even the great Jupiter Ammon himself, were located by the mythologists in Africa. These fables teach us who were then accounted the nobles of the human race.

“But all at once, within two or three hundred years, since the *enslavement* of the African race on the American islands and continent, the wonderful discovery is made—and a discovery, too, *confined wholly* to countries where the negro has been enslaved—the discovery is made that the Ethiopians, the tutors of the whole civilized world, are become an inferior race! A pale-faced young sophomore, in college, will feel his dignity insulted, if you ask him to recite in the same class with a pious and intelligent young colored man. Why? He belongs to an inferior and degraded race. But—what book do you hold in your hands, young man? ‘Euclid’s Elements, sir’—is the answer; and the air and the tone inform you of his conscious pride of intellect, in having been able to master and appropriate its precious contents. But who was Euclid? Who!—the Father of mathematical science—a *negro*, who flourished some three thousand years ago! And some of our learned Doctors of Divinity, chin deep in the huge volumes of theologic lore, transmitted down from the early fathers of the Christian church, will write grave treatises to prove that the curse of Canaan is righteously visited by atheistic hands upon the negroes—the posterity of Ham!

--that not even the gospel light can ever elevate the negro in this country; that he is of a degraded caste, and must remain such. The gospel must be preached to the negro, if preached at all, in some remote corner, by himself. The ordinances of religion, if administered to him at all, must be administered in such a way as to tell every one, that he is *not* received 'as a brother beloved.' And yet, the same learned man will swell with more than usual dignity of conscious knowledge, when, in his polemic and theological strife, he can quote on his own side of a contested question, the arguments, or even the opinion of a Cyprian, a Cyril, or a St. Augustine. And tell me, venerable Father, who are these? Cyprian, Cyril and Augustine, were pious and learned Christian Bishops and Theologians, Fathers of the Christian church, many centuries ago; and they were *negroes*! Does this learned disciple expect to sit down with them in heaven? And will he continue to speak of their countrymen as being of a degraded caste?

"It is vain, then, to talk of this prejudice as the result of a 'principle of natural instinct.' It is equally vain to talk of the abolition of slavery in America, without the abolition of this prejudice. The south points to the colored people of the north trodden down under the iron hoof of this *prejudice*, more grievously than they are in the south, and asks us if we would have slavery abolished while this *prejudice* remains:

She tells us, and speaks truly, that while the free colored man of the *south* is free to pursue any mechanical trade, is patronized according to his merit, and is neither spurned from the steamboat or the stage—he is driven like a reptile from among men at the *north*, and not suffered to find a resting-place for his foot. When the north rebukes the south for its *slavery*, the south retorts upon the north for its antipathy and *prejudice*. The newspapers of Maryland and Virginia cried out against the barbarians of Canterbury and of Canaan. They declared that such schools for *free* colored people, were laudable and praiseworthy, and would have excited no such malignity at the south. I do not believe that God can consistently crown our efforts for emancipation with success, till we first pull out the beam that is in our own eye. The very quintessence of slavery is embodied in this prejudice. It is the keenest edge of the iron that enters into the colored man's soul. It is that portion of slavery which offers the highest affront to the common Father of all men. It is the main pillar of the slave system. If two millions and a half of our *white* brethren were enslaved, the entire north would become abolitionists in one day; and the result would be the same, if the unholy prejudice were removed, which prompts us to seat our poor brother in a low place, not because of his 'vile raiment,' [see James 1. 3.] but because of the color his Maker

has seen fit to give him.—And for myself, I would sooner take the ground of the skeptic, and deny the oneness of the human family and the obligation of impartial love to all men, than to admit the divine mission of Moses, and yet treat men as though I considered it a fiction !”

Extract from a speech of the HON. ALEXANDER H. EVERETT, before the Mass. Col. Society, Feb. 7, 1838.

SIR.—We are sometimes told that all these efforts will be unavailing—that the African is a degraded member of the human family—that a man with a dark skin and curled hair, is necessarily, as such, incapable of improvement and civilization, and condemned by the vice of his physical conformation, to vegetate for ever in a state of hopeless barbarism. Mr. President, I reject, with contempt and indignation, this miserable heresy. In replying to it, the friends of truth and humanity have not hitherto done justice to the argument. In order to prove that the blacks were capable of intellectual efforts, they have painfully collected a few imperfect specimens of what some of them have done in this way, even in the degraded condition which they occupy at present in Christendom. Sir, this is not the way to treat the subject. Go

back to an earlier period in the history of our race. See what the blacks were and what they did three thousand years ago, in the period of their greatness and glory, when they occupied the fore front in the march of civilization—when they constituted in fact the whole civilized world of their time. Trace this very civilization, of which we are so proud, to its origin, and see where you will find it. We received it from our European ancestors: they had it from the Greeks and Romans, and the Jews. But, Sir, where did the Greeks, and the Romans, and the Jews, get it? They derived it from Ethiopia and Egypt—in one word, from Africa. Moses, we are told, was instructed in all the learning of the Egyptians. The founders of the principal Grecian cities, such as Athens, Thebes and Delphi, came from Egypt; and for centuries afterwards, their descendants returned to that country, as the source and centre of civilization. There it was that the generous and stirring spirits of the time—Herodotus, Homer, Plato, Pythagoras, and the rest, made their noble voyages of intellectual and moral discovery, as ours now make them in England, France, Germany and Italy. Sir, the Egyptians were the masters of the Greeks and the Jews, and consequently of all the modern nations, in civilization, and they had carried it very nearly as far—in some respects, perhaps, a good deal farther than any subsequent people. The ruins

of the Egyptian temples laugh to scorn the architectural monuments of any other part of the world. They will be what they are now, the delight and admiration of travellers from all quarters, when the grass is growing on the sites of St. Peter's and St. Paul's—the present pride of Rome and London.

Well, Sir, who were the Egyptians? They were Africans :—and of what race? It is sometimes pretended, that though Africans, and of Ethiopian extraction, they were not black. But what says the father of history, who had travelled among them, and knew their appearance, as well as we know that of our neighbors in Canada? Sir, Herodotus tells you that the Egyptians were blacks, with curled hair. Some writers have undertaken to dispute his authority, but I cannot bring myself to believe that the father of history did not know black from white. It seems, therefore, that for this very civilization of which we are so proud, and which is the only ground of our present claim of superiority, we are indebted to the ancestors of these very blacks, whom we are pleased to consider as naturally incapable of civilization.

So much for the supposed inferiority of the colored race, and their incapacity to make any progress in civilization and improvement. And it is worth while, Mr. President, to remark, that the prejudice which is commonly entertained in this country, but which does not exist to any

thing like the same extent in Europe, against the color of the blacks, seems to have grown out of the unnatural position which they occupy among us. At the period to which I have just alluded, when the blacks took precedence of the whites in civilization, science and political power, no such prejudice appears to have existed. The early Greek writers speak of the Ethiopians and Egyptians as a superior variety of the species :—superior, not merely in intellectual and moral qualities, but, what may seem to be much more remarkable, in outward appearance. The Ethiopians, says Herodotus, excel all other nations in longevity, stature and personal beauty. The black prince, Memnon, who served among the Trojan auxiliaries at the siege of Troy, (probably an Egyptian prince,) is constantly spoken of by the Greek and Latin writers. as a person of extraordinary beauty, and is qualified as the son of Aurora, or the morning. There are, in short, no traces of any prejudice whatever against the color of the blacks, like that which has grown up in modern times, and which is obviously the result of the relative condition of the two races. This prejudice forms at present, as was correctly observed by President Madison in one of his speeches in the late Virginia Convention, the chief obstacle to the practical improvement of that portion of them who reside in this country.

Archbishop Sharp.

THE grandfather of Granville Sharp, in a sermon preached before the British House of Commons, one hundred and fifty-six years ago, used the following remarkable language :

“ That Africa, which is not now more fruitful in monsters, than it was once for excellently wise and learned men—that Africa, which formerly afforded us our *Clemens*, our *Origen*, our *Tertullian*, our *Cyprian*, our *Augustin*, and many other extraordinary lights in the Church of God—that famous Africa, in whose soil Christianity did thrive so prodigiously, and could boast of so many flourishing churches—alas ! is now a wilderness. ‘ The wild boars have broken into the vineyard and ate it up, and it brings forth nothing but briars and thorns,’ to use the words of the prophet. And who knows but God may suddenly make this church and nation, this our England, which, Jeshurun-like, is waxed fat and grown proud, and has kicked against God, *such another example of vengeance of this kind.*”